

Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.) are turning up the pressure on the House and the Senate to pass their legislation honoring civil rights leader and American hero Rosa Parks with a statue in the U.S. Capitol's famed National Statuary Hall.

Kerry and Jackson want Congress to pass their bills by December 1, 2005 -- the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks' courageous decision not to move to the back of the bus.

"Rosa Parks was one of our greatest American heroes, a woman whose quiet courage changed a country. She deserves the highest honors this country can give," said Kerry. "There ought to be 100 Senators on this bill, and that's what I'm focusing on now. I am honored to join with Congressman Jackson and hundreds of our colleagues on this effort. I can think of no better way to honor the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks' brave act against injustice than by passing legislation that ensures that schoolchildren, members of Congress and presidents visiting the Capitol can see how highly our nation thinks of her, and that we need to follow her example of refusing to go quietly to the back of the bus."

Jackson said, "Rosa Parks is generally known as the mother of the civil rights movement and for initiating an action - the Montgomery bus boycott - that brought to prominence Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. But she was much more than that. Her quiet but determined resolve inspired human rights activists around the world to fight for justice and to end oppression. She inspired Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress to fight against apartheid in South Africa; inspired people like the young man who stood in front of a tank in China's Tiananmen Square; and she was an inspiration to many in the freedom and democratic movements of Eastern Europe."

Jackson and Kerry are working this week to get a vote on H.R. 4145 in the House and to gather more co-sponsors in the Senate for S.1959.

As part of their efforts, Kerry and Jackson will be reaching out to media across the country to enlist citizen participation in their campaign to honor Mrs. Parks with a statue in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall.

Both Kerry and Jackson will be conducting interviews on radio, television and in print this week to encourage interested citizens to contact their members of Congress and lobby for the bill.